

# quick facts

## **About...*Haemophilus influenzae* type b**

### **What is *Haemophilus influenzae* type b disease?**

*Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) disease is a bacterial illness that may cause serious infections in young children, including meningitis (an infection of the coverings of the spinal cord and brain), blood infections, pneumonia, arthritis, and infections in other parts of the body. In some instances, Hib disease may cause death.

### **What are the symptoms of Hib disease?**

Hib disease usually causes high fever, irritability, aching, tiredness, and sometimes nausea and vomiting. Because the bacteria can infect different parts of the body, other symptoms may occur. The incubation period for Hib disease is about 2-4 days.

### **How is Hib disease spread?**

Hib disease is spread by contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person, which can happen when an infected person coughs or sneezes near someone else or someone touches objects contaminated with nose or throat drainage. Infected persons can spread Hib disease as long as the bacteria are present in the nose and throat, even after they appear to be well.

### **Who is at risk for Hib disease?**

Infants and children under age 5 are at increased risk for Hib disease if they are unvaccinated. American Indian/Alaska Native populations are at increased risk for Hib disease, and vaccination of children in these populations is a priority. Adults with weakened immune systems can sometimes be at risk for Hib disease and should speak to their health care providers about immunization.

### **How do I know if I have Hib disease?**

See your health care provider. Since the development of new Hib vaccines in 1990, the number of reported cases in children under 5 years of age in the United States has drastically declined. Many other diseases, including other types of *Haemophilus influenzae*, can have the same symptoms as Hib disease.

### **How is Hib disease treated?**

Since Hib disease is a bacterial infection, it can be treated with the appropriate antibiotics. Household contacts and playmates under age 4 of children with the disease may need to take antibiotics to prevent infection.

### **How can Hib be prevented?**

The Hib vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing serious disease in young children and is included in the recommended childhood immunization schedule for children up to 5 years of age. See your health care provider to determine if your child should receive Hib vaccine. Older children and some adults with certain medical conditions, such as not having a spleen or having deficient or weakened immune systems, may be at increased risk for Hib disease. Your health care provider can determine if you or your child needs Hib vaccine.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hib/in-short-adult.htm>.

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